

within touch of the invader and preparations were made on both sides for a pitched battle. The numbers of Licinius's army were scarcely half those of his rival, but Maximin was completely routed on a plain called Serenus, near the city of Adrianople and fled for his life, leaving his broken battalions to shift for themselves. Lactantius, in describing the engagement,* represents it as having been a due to the death between Christianity and paganism. He says that Maximin had vowed to eradicate the very name of the Christians if Jupiter favoured his arms; while Licinius had been warned by an angel of God in a dream that, if he wished to make infallibly sure of victory, he and his army had only to recite a prayer to Almighty God which the angel would dictate to him. Licinius at once sent for a secretary and the prayer was taken down. It ran as follows:

"God most High, we call upon Thee; Holy God, we call upon Thee. We commend to Thee all justice; we commend to Thee our safety; we commend to Thee our sovereignty. Through Thee we live; through Thee we gain victory and happiness. Most High and Holy God, hear our prayers. We stretch out our arms to Thee. Hear us, Most High and Holy God."

Such was the talismanic prayer of which the Emperor's secretary made hurried copies, distributing them to the general officers and the tribunes of the legions, with instructions that the troops were

* *Pe Mart. Perss.*, c. 46.